

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BAMA KO 02924 01 OF 02 161051Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 EB-07 PM-04 DODE-00 AID-05
DHA-02 ACDA-07 SS-15 OMB-01 IGA-02 TRSE-00
CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 NSC-05 SP-02 L-03 H-01
MC-02 /084 W

-----087364 161058Z /13

R 160958Z JUL 77

FM AMEMBASSY BAMA KO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6962
INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY DAKAR
AMEMBASSY NIAMEY
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BAMA KO 2924

DAKAR ALSO FOR USDAO

E. O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: MASS ML US
SUBJECT: MALIAN REQUEST FOR MILITARY ASSISTANCE

REF: STATE 158083

1. SUMMARY: DEFENSE MINISTER RAISED THE QUESTION OF LIMITED MILITARY ASSISTANCE ON MARCH 21 BUT NEVER FOLLOWED UP WITH EXPECTED FORMAL LETTER OF REQUEST. WE STRONGLY FAVOR SUCH AN FMS AND TRAINING PROGRAM BUT ONLY AFTER SOME TANGIBLE EVIDENCE OF A MORE GENUINELY NEUTRAL MALIAN POSITION IN INTERNATIONAL FORUMS, WHICH WE HOPE WILL COME IN THE AUGUST SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE OF 24.
END SUMMARY.

2. DURING CALL ON DEFENSE MINISTER KISSIMA DOUKARA MARCH 21 TO INTRODUCE DEFENSE ATTACHE LIEUTENANT COLONEL RICHARD D HIGHERS,
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DOUKARA INFORMALLY RAISED THE POSSIBILITY OF RESUMING A SMALL-SCALE MILITARY ASSISTANCE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNITED STATES. HE SAID SUCH A RELATIONSHIP HAD EXISTED IN THE PAST, AND MILA CONSIDERED IT VALUABLE. HE SPOKE OF TRAINING IN THE UNITED STATES (NATURE UNSPECIFIED) AND AN ENGLISH-LANGUAGE LABORATORY HERE TO PREPARE THE CANDIDATES FOR SUCH TRAINING HE MENTIONED PARACHUTES ONLY IN THE CONTEXT OF ITEMS LOST UNDER THE 1975 SUSPENSION OF

THE FMS CREDIT, AND HE DID NOT RENEW THAT REQUEST. DOUKARA ALSO BROUGHT UP THE NEED OF A C-130, BUT WE QUICKLY DISMISSED THAT PROSPECT BECAUSE OF THE ABSENCE OF CREDIT POSSIBILITIES.

3. CONCERNING THE MINOR ITEMS THE DEFENSE MINISTER RAISED, I SAID THAT SERIOUS BUREAUCRATIC OBSTACLES EXISTED TO THE REOPENING OF THE SUSPENDED FMS CREDIT (SINCE DEOBLIGATED), BUT, PERHAPS EVEN MORE IMPORTANT, SOME POLITICAL ASPECTS WERE INVOLVED. DOUKARA RESPONDED THAT THE MALI-UPPER VOLTA BORDER DISPUTE WAS OVER. I SAID WE HAD NOTED THE HIGH-LEVEL PUBLIC STATEMENTS TO THAT EFFECT ON BOTH SIDES AND ACCEPTED THEM. BUT THERE WERE OTHER PROBLEMS: MALI HAD CRITICIZED THE UNITED STATES IN HIGHLY UN-FRIENDLY TERMS AT THE UNITED NATIONS AND HAD VOTED AGAINST US ON KEY ISSUES, SUCH AS KOREA AND PUERTO RICO. ONE COULD NOT DIVORCE MALI'S ACTIONS IN MULTILATERAL FORUMS FROM ITS BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES, AND THE INTERESTS OF BOTH PARTIES HAD TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT. I REPEATED THE THEME IN VARIOUS WAYS AND (WITH A SMILE) ASKED THE NOTE-TAKER TO BE SURE TO INCLUDE IT IN HIS REPORT OF THE CONVERSATION.

4. DOUKARA TOOK IT ALL IN BUT MADE NO COMMENT. IT WAS AGREED THAT HE WOULD SEND ME A FORMAL LETTER WITH PRECISE INFORMATION CON-

CERNING THE ITEMS AND TRAINING REQUESTED, FOLLOWING WHICH I WOULD TAKE UP THE MATTER WITH WASHINGTON.

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5. I USED THE OCCASION TO BRING UP A LONG-STANDING FMS BILL FOR \$16,827 WHICH THE DEFENSE MINISTRY PAID THE FOLLOWING MONTH, PRESUMABLY TO CLEAR THE BOOKS WITH AN EYE ON THE FUTURE.

6. AT THE RESIDENCE THE EVENING OF MARCH 21, THE DEFENSE MINISTER AGAIN REFERRED TO THE EARLIER BENEFICIAL MILITARY RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNITED STATES, ASSERTED THAT MALI WOULD NEVER ASK TO BUY ARMS FROM US, AND REITERATED HIS INTENT TO SEND ME A DETAILED LETTER ON THE TRAINING AND NON-LETHAL ITEMS DESIRED.

7. THAT LETTER HAS NEVER ARRIVED, AND I HAVE CAREFULLY DONE NOTHING TO STIMULATE IT, BECAUSE OF THE STILL-UNRESOLVED POLITICAL DIVERGENCES. AMBASSADOR SIMA'S RECENT APPROACH IS THEREFORE INTERESTING. IT MAY REFLECT DOUKARA'S KNOWN INSISTENCE ON DEALING DIRECTLY, WHICH HE COULD DO WITH THE DEPARTMENT THROUGH SIMA, WHEREAS ANY FORMAL LETTER TO ME WOULD HAVE TO GO THROUGH THE FOREIGN MINISTRY.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BAMA KO 2924

DAKAR ALSO FOR USDAO

8. AS MOST RECENTLY STATED IN THE MALI PARM (BAMA KO 1568), I STRONGLY FAVOR THE EVENTUAL PROVISION OF MINOR ITEMS OF EQUIPMENT, SOME TRAINING IN THE UNITES STATES, AND AN ENGLISH-LANGUAGE LABORATORY, PARTICULARLY FOR THE ACCESS TO THE MILITARY HERE THAT AN AMERICAN LANGUAGE INSTRUCTOR WOULD HAVE. I BELIEVE THE FRENCH AND WEST GERMANS WOULD BE PLEASED BY SUCH A PROGRAM, SEEING IT AS A NOTEWORTHU COUNTER TO SOVIET INFLUENCE.

9. I WOULD NOT WISH US TO UNDERTAKE AN FMS PROGRAM, HOWEVER, UNTIL WE HAD SOME REAL EVIDENCE OF A MORE NEUTRAL STANCE ON MALI'S PART, APART FROM ITS APPARENTLY GENUINE STATEMENTS OF A DESIRE FOR IMPROVED RELATIONS AND ITS DELIBERATELY LARGE HIGH-LEVEL ATTENDANCE AT THE FOURTH OF JULY RECEPTION THIS YEAR. SINCE THE BAD YEAR OF 1975, THERE HAS BEEN NO OPPORTUNITY FOR SUCH A SIGN BECAUSE THE MOST CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES DID NOT SUBSEQUENTLY COME TO A VOTE IN THE UNITED NATIONS. PERHAPS THE AUGUST SESSION OF THE
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COMMITTEE OF 24 WILL BE MORE REVEALING.

10. AS FOR HOW AMBASSADOR SIMA'S DEMARCHE MIGHT BE UTILIZED TO PROMOTE US INTERESTS, I COULD GO TO DEFENSE MINISTER DOUKARA

AND FOREIGN MINISTRY SECRETARY GENERAL SEYDOU TRAORE AND SEEK TO USE THE MILITARY ASSISTANCE REQUEST INDIRECTLY TO SECURE "ABSENT" OR "ABSTAIN" VOTES (PROBABLY THE MOST TO BE HOPED FOR) ON PUERTO RICO, KOREA, OR OTHER PRIME ISSUES OF CONCERN TO THE DEPARTMENT. THAT APPROACH, HOWEVER, PRESUPPOSES THAT, IF THE MALIANS DO PROVE HELPFUL AND WE ARE PLAYING THE GAME, WE WOULD COME THROUGH ON THE FMS. THE ADMINISTRATION'S POLICY ON MILITARY ASSISTANCE, EVEN THOUGH ARMS WOULD NOT IN THIS CASE BE INVOLVED, AND OTHER FACTORS WOULD SEEM NOT TO MAKE SUCH AN OUTCOME A SURE THING.

11. I DO NOT BELIEVE A SMALL-SCALE FMS PROGRAM COULD BE USED TO EFFECT A MORE RAPID TRANSITION TO CIVILIAN RULE, NOW SCHEDULED FOR THE END OF 1979.

12. THE FOREGOING COMMENTS ARE FOCUSED ON MALI AND DO NOT ADDRESS REGIONAL CONSIDERATIONS. ONE POINT, HOWEVER -- WE DO NOT VIEW MALI AS A THREAT TO ITS NEIGHBORS.

13. TO SUM UP, I WOULD LIKE US TO RESPOND POSITIVELY TO AMBASSADOR SIMA'S REQUEST BECAUSE I BELIEVE A LIMITED MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM IN MALI TO BE IN THE US INTEREST. THE TIMING OF SUCH A POSITIVE RESPONSE SHOULD, HOWEVER, AWAIT A VISIBLE EXAMPLE OF A MALIAN EFFORT TO BE TRULY NEUTRAL IN INTERNATIONAL FORUMS. IT IS TO BE HOPED THAT SIGN WILL COME IN AUGUST OR SEPTEMBER. IF ONCE AGAIN NO OPPORTUNITY PRESENTS ITSELF, WE MAY WISH TO WAIVE THE REQUIREMENT.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY ASSISTANCE, MILITARY TRAINING
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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
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Executive Order: GS
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Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 STATE 158083
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
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Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1842137
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MALIAN REQUEST FOR MILITARY ASSISTANCE
TAGS: MASS, ML, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/7c2cc06a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009